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General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session
Items 131 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments; human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 23 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement issued on 17 July 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union concerning President Putin's statement supporting the abolition of the death penalty in the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Jean **De Ruyt**
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

* A/56/150.

01-46748 (E) 260701 260701

Annex to the letter dated 23 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement concerning President Putin's statement supporting the abolition of the death penalty in the Russian Federation issued on 17 July 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the comments made on 9 July 2001 by President Putin opposing the re-establishment of the death penalty in the Russian Federation.

The European Union calls upon the Russian Federation to abolish the death penalty both de facto and de jure and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible.

The European Union repeats its opposition to the death penalty, and reaffirms that it considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 54/248 B, the General Assembly decided to include all necessary resources in the budget for the biennium 2000-2001 to provide interpretation services for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States upon request by those groupings, on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, through the Committee on Conferences, a report on the implementation of that decision. The Committee fulfilled its reporting requirement through its annual report to the Assembly. A report on the item (A/55/182) was issued in accordance with paragraph 11 of the above resolution.

2. Furthermore, in paragraph 4 of section II of its resolution 55/222, the General Assembly reiterated the decision and request for the ensuing biennium.

3. The present report, submitted pursuant to the above-mentioned requests, contains statistics of meetings of regional and other major groupings held from the beginning of July 2000 to the end of June 2001, including a breakdown by regional group.

4. The General Assembly has mandated the Secretariat to make provision in its requests for resources for the servicing of such groups, while at the same time maintaining its decision that services should be provided on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice, that is, without any servicing capacity being specifically allocated for that purpose.

5. The manner in which the Secretariat has addressed these mandates has derived from the actual practice of calendar bodies. Every biennium, several hundred meetings are planned for in its capacity requirements and eventually scheduled. Cancellations of calendar body meetings reduce the number of meetings actually held, thus freeing capacity to service regional and other major groupings.

II. Data

6. With regard to New York, for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001, 100 per cent of the 863 requests for facilities alone were met. The need for groups to meet outside traditional working hours continued. As to provision of interpretation services, out of 275 requests, 249 were met, or a total of 91 per cent. At peak periods, some meetings were scheduled and provided with services outside regular working hours, especially after 6 p.m.

7. With respect to Geneva, for the same period 100 per cent of the 43 requests for interpretation and 1 request for facilities were met. At Vienna, 100 per cent of the 449 requests for facilities only were met. In Nairobi, 100 per cent of 152 requests for facilities were met (for the breakdown by groupings, see the table in paragraph 9 below).

8. The main difficulty in providing services during this 12-month period continued, as in previous years, to be: (a) an increase in the number of scheduled meetings over previous years, including heavy activity related specifically to the Millennium Summit in September 2000 and prior to and in preparation for three special sessions of the General Assembly; (b) an ongoing tendency towards lengthier meetings of the Security Council, additional and sometimes parallel

meetings of its working groups alone (101, over the reporting period, separate and apart from other Security Council meetings). The latter, of course, is very difficult to predict.

9. The table below contains statistics for the four duty stations.

	Interpretation services			*Conference facilities*	
	Requested	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
Breakdown by grouping, July 2000-June 2001, New York					
Group of 77	84	76	8	556	556
Non-Aligned Movement	8	6	2	36	36
African Group	60	56	4	56	56
Asian Group	12	11	1	5	5
Latin American and Caribbean Group	16	14	2	10	10
Western European and Other States Group	16	16	0	6	6
Arab Group	1	1	-	83	83
Alliance of Small Island States	-	-	-	-	-
Association of Caribbean States	-	-	-	-	-
Association of South-East Asian Nations	1	1	-	2	2
Caribbean Community	-	-	-	2	2
Commonwealth States	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern European Group	-	-	-	13	13
Economic Community of West African States	13	12	1	6	6
European Community	1	-	-	-	-
Central American Group	-	-	-	2	2
Islamic Group (OIC)	24	23	1	17	17
Joint Coordinating Committee of Group of 77 and Movement of Non-Aligned Countries	5	5	0	1	1
JUSCANZ (Japan, United States, Canada and New Zealand)	0	0	0	36	36
Landlocked Countries	5	4	1	7	7
Least Developed Countries	23	17	6	14	14
Rio Group	7	7	-	9	9
Southern African Development Community	-	-	-	2	2
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	-	-	-	-	-
South Pacific Forum	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	**275**	**249**	**26**	**863**	**863**

	Interpretation services			*Conference facilities*	
	Requested	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
Breakdown by grouping, July 2000-June 2001, Geneva					
Group of 77	14	14	-	-	-
African Group	7	7	-	1	1
Eastern European Group	2	2	-	-	-
Asian Group	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American and Caribbean Group	19	19	-	-	-
Islamic Group (OIC)	1	1	-	-	-
Subtotal	**43**	**43**	**-**	**1**	**1**
Breakdown by grouping, July 2000-June 2001, Vienna					
African Group	-	-	-	64	64
Asian Group	-	-	-	17	17
States from List D (Eastern EU)	-	-	-	8	8
Eastern European	-	-	-	121	121
Group of 77	-	-	-	48	48
Latin American and Caribbean Group	-	-	-	75	75
Western Europe and Other States	-	-	-	19	19
Andean Group	-	-	-	1	1
Arab Group	-	-	-	6	6
ASEAN Group	-	-	-	31	31
G-8 Group	-	-	-	46	46
Other regional groups	-	-	-	13	13
Subtotal	**-**	**-**	**-**	**449**	**449**
Breakdown by grouping, July 2000-June 2001, Nairobi					
Group of 77 and China	-	-	-	21	21
European Union Coordination Group	-	-	-	28	28
Eastern European Group	-	-	-	1	1
JUSCANZ (Japan, United States, Canada and New Zealand)	-	-	-	8	8
Western European and Other States Group	-	-	-	19	19
European Commission	-	-	-	1	1
African Group	-	-	-	16	16
Arab Group	-	-	-	16	16
Latin American and Caribbean Group	-	-	-	16	16

	Interpretation services			*Conference facilities*	
	Requested	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
Central and Eastern European Group	-	-	-	16	16
Asian Group	-	-	-	10	10
Subtotal				**152**	**152**
Grand total					
July 2000-June 2001	**318**	**292**	**26**	**1 465**	**1 465**
July 1999-June 2000	**321**	**269**	**52**	**1 194**	**1 194**
July 1998-June 1999	**314**	**262**	**52**	**909**	**909**

10. In order to provide services and facilities whenever possible to regional and other major groupings, the responsible sections of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services at each duty station continued to work closely with the secretaries/organizers of calendar or other meetings with confirmed services so as to have adequate notice of cancellations or other instances where services might not be needed for the full three-hour block. By providing this information ahead of time, more regional groups, which often meet for less than three hours, were able to receive the services they needed. Coordinating this information with the regional groups is the key to providing interpretation when conference services are so stretched.

11. As indicated in paragraph 8 above, there was an increase in the percentage of meetings provided with interpretation despite the volume of scheduled and other intergovernmental meetings in 2001. A significant factor in providing facilities to meetings was the relative shortage of meeting rooms in the most recent reporting period, especially related to the upkeep of and repairs to the General Assembly Hall and other meeting rooms. In addition, most regional groups do not wish to meet outside traditional meeting hours.

III. Conclusion

12. The percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings that were provided with interpretation for the period recorded here has risen steadily from 84 per cent during the period 1998-1999 to 90 per cent for the current period for New York, that is, July 2000 to June 2001. Overall, for all four duty stations, 92 per cent of the requests for interpretation was met. It should be recalled that, in accordance with paragraph 8 of section II of resolution 55/222, intergovernmental bodies should bear in mind the servicing needs of related regional and other major groupings before requesting cancellation of assigned resources.

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Fifty-sixth session
Item 136 of the provisional agenda*
Pattern of conferences

Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Paragraph 6

First sentence

For 863 *read* 862.

Third sentence

For 249 *read* 248.

For 91 per cent *read* 90 per cent.

Paragraph 9, table, against "Western European and Other States Group", "Subtotal" and "Grand total"

The entries should read:

	Interpretation services			*Conference facilities*	
	Requested	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
Breakdown by grouping, July 2000-June 2001, New York					
Western European and Other States Group	16	15	1	5	5
Subtotal	**275**	**248**	**27**	**862**	**862**
Grand total July 2000-June 2001	**318**	**291**	**27**	**1 464**	**1 464**

Paragraph 12, first sentence

For 1998-1999 *read* 1999-2000.

* A/56/50.

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Fifty-sixth session
Item 99 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/130 of 8 December 2000, paragraph 8 of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "8. *Requests* the Secretary-General:
>
> "(a) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate the Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;
>
> "(b) To continue to make available such additional staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;
>
> "(c) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 6 above;
>
> "(d) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;

* A/56/150.

** The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-46917 (E) 220801

"(e) To report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution".

2. All necessary facilities were provided to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. Arrangements were made for the Special Committee to meet in March and October 2000. Furthermore, the Special Committee carried out a field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 18 to 31 May 2000. Two periodic reports (A/55/373 and Add.1) and the thirty-second report of the Special Committee (A/55/453) have been circulated to Member States.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 55/130, the Department of Public Information undertook the following activities:

(a) The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of the meetings of the Special Committee. Extensive press and audio-visual coverage was also provided for the meetings of the Commission on Human Rights. The methods used by the Department to provide that coverage included production of press releases, publications, television news packages and radio programmes and organization of press briefings and briefings for the public;

(b) The Department continued to disseminate United Nations information materials, documents and press releases on the activities of the Special Committee and the Commission on Human Rights through the global network of United Nations information centres and services in 67 countries, the 357 depository libraries in 142 countries and the Internet. The Department also continued to make information materials available to non-governmental organizations through its resource centres in New York, Geneva and Vienna;

(c) The Department, through its information centres, provided support to the Special Committee's field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic in May 2000.

4. By a letter dated 25 June 2001, the Interim Head of the Department of Public Information informed the Chairman of the Special Committee that the findings of the report of the Special Committee would be incorporated into a revised and updated version of the Department's publication, *United Nations and the question of Palestine* (DPI/1481). The publication, which includes a chapter on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and quotes extensively from the report, will be available for distribution in September/October 2001.

5. In the same letter, the Department informed the Chairman of the Special Committee that copies of its report had also been included in the official information kit prepared for participants at the International Media Encounter on the Question of Palestine, organized by the Department in Paris on 18 and 19 June 2001. Furthermore, the report of the Special Committee and its findings had been highlighted in presentations made by the Department at a conference held at St. John's University, Minnesota, United States of America, on 20 and 21 May 2001, and at a briefing at United Nations Headquarters for students of the University of Groeningen, Netherlands, on 8 June 2001. An electronic version of the report was also distributed by the Public Inquiries Unit of the Department in response to requests received from the public and from educational institutions.

6. It should be also noted that, on 31 May 2001, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to all States drawing attention to resolutions 55/130, 55/131, 55/132, 55/133 and 55/134, of 8 December 2000.

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25 July 2001

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Fifty-sixth session
Item 99 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab Territories

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/131 of 8 December 2000, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
>
> "2. *Demands* that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and that it comply scrupulously with the provisions of the Convention;
>
> "3. *Calls upon* all States parties to the Convention, in accordance with article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, to exert all efforts in order to ensure respect for its provisions by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

* A/56/150.

** The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-46923 (E) 070801

"4. *Reiterates* the need for speedy implementation of the recommendations contained in its resolutions ES-10/3 of 15 July 1997, ES-10/4 of 13 November 1997, ES-10/5 of 17 March 1998, ES-10/6 of 9 February 1999 and ES-10/7 of 20 October 2000 with regard to ensuring respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the provisions of the Convention;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 31 May 2001, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 31 May 2001, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of all States parties to the Convention to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 55/131.

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Fifty-sixth session
Item 99 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/132 of 8 December 2000, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal and an obstacle to peace and economic and social development;
>
> "2. *Calls upon* Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and to the occupied Syrian Golan and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Convention, in particular article 49;
>
> "3. *Demands* complete cessation of the construction of the new settlement in Jabal Abu-Ghneim and of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
>
> "4. *Stresses* the need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, in which, among other things, the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to take and implement measures, including, inter alia, confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers, and called for

* A/56/150.

** The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

01-46929 (E) 090801

measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory;

"5. *Reiterates its call* for the prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers, particularly in the light of recent developments;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 31 May 2001, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Minister inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.